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II.

FRANCE.

The study of personality, from the point of view of pathological psychology, has already supplied us with numerous books. M. ALFRED BINET, in his fine work, *Les Alterations de la Personnalité*, has undertaken to present systematically to us these alterations in their entirety, while restricting himself to ascertained results, and avoiding disputed points. He exhibits to us the "dismemberment of the ego" in diseased states, the frequent rupture of that "unity of consciousness" which is the principal attribute of the normal individual.

Clinical observation has established the existence in certain subjects of successive personalities, and in others that of co-existing personalities; the experiences of suggestion have at last allowed of analogous morbid phenomena being provoked, in such a manner that cases may be varied and rendered still more instructive. The simple movements provoked in normal persons in states of distraction, of which many very curious examples may be found in M. Binet's book, are the recognised mark of a subconsciousness; but it is often possible, under the same conditions and with the same processes, to provoke in a hypnotisable hysteric individual an actual sub-personality, that is to say, to augment the phenomena which attentive observers have long since remarked in everyday life.

It cannot be doubted that, on the one hand, it is possible to produce in an insensible limb a great variety of subconscious actions, and all sorts of reactions; and when they are recorded by the graphic method, it is perceived that with the fingers of his insensible hand, the subject has made movements the form of which varies according to the receiving apparatus (the dynamograph, drum, pencil, etc.). These movements thus exhibit the truly psychological marks of adaptation, and seem to reveal the existence of an intelligence which is other than that of the ego of the subject, and which acts without his assistance and even unknown to him.

On the other hand, numerous experiences of very different kinds show that the subject whose anæsthetic arm, for example, is pricked, can have an idea of the stimulation, although he does not perceive it. He does not feel the prickings, but the excitation calls forth the idea of their number: he counts them as a normal individual would do; "only, in hysterical individuals, the first part of the process occurs in one consciousness, and the second in another." *

It can hardly be denied that these different consciousnesses are distinct; since experience proves that each can have its own perceptions, its own memory, and even a moral character. However, their relative value with respect to each other matters little. We are compelled to consider, with M. Ribot, the ego as a "coördination" of states of consciousness, admitting of infinitely variable groupings. According to the old conception of the ego, the personality, with respect to secondary consciousnesses, was compared to a coachman who had ceased to have control over his horses. This comparison is now insufficient, since it may happen that the coachman falls asleep on the box, and that one of the horses then governs the set, regulating, more or less perfectly, the pace of the others by its own gait. Spiritualists, however, will never consent to put the ego in the place of the coachman. "A stone detached from the complex structure of the personality," M. Binet now tells us, "can become the starting point of a new structure, which rises rapidly by the side of the old. Whereupon a disaggregation of the psychological elements is produced." This comparison is certainly more precise and more in accordance with facts.

Moreover, there remains to be explained how the mental compound which constitutes the ego has been constructed from its elements. M. Binet shows, *à propos* of this question, that the association of ideas is powerless to explain the genesis of personality; associations alone, as proved by the experiences of suggestion, are not sufficient to restore forgotten memories. Neither is memory the sole factor in personality; since, in certain conditions a person

* The hypothesis of the division of consciousness explains, consequently, much better than that of the motive force of mental images, the facts of automatic writing (spiritism). [The works of Binet, Roberty, and Lombroso are published by Alcan.]

may, while preserving the consciousness and the memory of certain of his mental states, nevertheless repudiate these mental states and consider them as foreign to himself.

This question is still an open one. But there exist certainly some grounds for our seeking in the division of consciousness the key to certain psychological facts, like unconscious cerebration. Such a key would be the action of detached consciousnesses and detached memories, that afterwards immediately enter the current of general consciousness. Finally, "it is possible," as M. Binet says in conclusion, "that consciousness may be the privilege of certain of our psychic acts; it is possible also that it exists everywhere in our organism, and it may be even that it accompanies every manifestation of life."

* * *

In his new work, *Agnosticism*, M. DE ROBERTY studies with special care the position of modern doctrines with regard to the unknown, the great *x* of philosophic speculations—God, Idea, Matter, Noumenon or Unknowable. Although perhaps a little hastily written, and somewhat obscure, his book nevertheless enforces conviction. "Our conception of the world," says M. de Roberty, "embraces solely the things that we *know* (feel, perceive, imagine, analyse, compare, etc.), and does not comprise the least jot or tittle of what we *do not know*. For us, therefore, there can be no question of any relations except between two classes of *known* elements: that which constitutes the object of scientific research, and that which is outside of science. The latter class represents *our* unknown, which is always *relative and purely human*." Here, indeed, we have the true point of view, that which we shall all reach, though perhaps at first unknown to ourselves; and I shall be much surprised if the philosophers do not at last decide to wipe out the formidable *Unknowable* set up by Spencer as the ultimate entity. We shall speak no more of the fathomless universe, but of the still unexplored universe; of the unknown, not of the unknowable.

There is, however, another aspect of the question. Let us suppose the unknown got rid of; or to be more precise,—and if we regard with M. de Roberty the psychic centres as special receivers in

which the cosmical energy empties itself, resolving itself into sensation and idea, and from whence it spreads itself anew as motion,—let us suppose that we have summed up all the energies received and emitted, and verified the law which reduces memory to the conservation of energy; let us suppose in fine that philosophy shall have found in the ego the synthesis of the non-ego, expressed “in symbolic abbreviations and in signs,” and shall have realised the “logical monism” which reduces things to their ideas: would the intellect—and would the sensibility—even then be completely satisfied? Can we conceive a state in which the curiosity of man as to all that concerns himself will be at rest, and when he will cease to be disquieted about the cause of suffering and of life? Kant long ago propounded this question. But, according to M. de Roberty, the thinker who is “a prey to the afflux of emotion referred to by Kant,” the man “given over to the desire for another kind of knowledge than that of experience,” are, in the category of intellectual emotions, diseased and “perverted” persons. “The sentiments, so varied in aspect and in strength, which inspire us,” writes he, “the contemplation of the unknown, determine the mental illusion which materialises, so to say, our ignorance and transforms the unknown into the unknowable.”

Would it be inconsistent, however, to preserve the emotion of the unknown without “materialising” it, without pronouncing any dangerous scientific *ignorabimus*? M. de Roberty does not accept this situation,—which was that of Littré. I do not know whether any one will discover the “vaccine,” as he calls it, “of the pessimist emotion which has produced agnosticism or latent religiosity.” If this constitutes a mental malady, I fear much that it will be incurable. As long as there is unhappiness in life, there will also be unsatisfied curiosity, and for a very long time to come, inquietude.

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The last publication of LOMBROSO and LASCHI, *Le Crime politique et les Révolutions, par rapport au droit, à l'anthropologie criminelle et à la science du gouvernement* (Political Crime and Revolutions, in their Relation to Law, Criminal Anthropology, and the Science of Government) of which we here have a French translation, is, I

will not say, the worst written, but the most confused work imaginable. Its arrangement is clear, but its examples are given without any order whatever. The facts presented are abundant, but they are taken rather too much at haphazard, and often too uncritically. The worst is that its very thesis is weak, badly formulated or elusive in places. What a pity it is that so much erudition should be expended, and so many valuable data be brought together without better success in displaying to the best advantage these riches, and also, let me say, without so many times having had occasion to appear so clearly in the wrong! M. Lombroso remains unmoved, unfortunately, in his high sounding and unqualified hypothesis of "diseased genius." He continues to develop it and to defend it in this latest book of his, which is replete with instructive details, and which is undoubtedly the first considerable attempt at an etiology of revolutions and of political crime.

The complex doctrine of Lombroso could be sufficiently summed up, if I am not mistaken, by uniting word to word—by the mathematical sign of equality—philoneism (or the love of novelties) with the revolutionary spirit, the revolutionary spirit with genius, genius with insanity, insanity with criminality, and criminality, finally, with progress. But what a detestable thing progress would then be! We should have to protect ourselves against it as we do against a pestilence. The evolution of societies does not take place without great waste and loss, as we all know. It should be carefully shown what these losses are. The study of the conditions of social progress ought to be made in greater detail than is here found. The terms of the imagined equation, which here hovers before our eyes, should in fine, if any comparison is to be effected between them, be subjected to a much more exact quantitative and qualitative analysis.

For example, let us take genius. Of what kinds of genius does Lombroso speak? It seems to be sufficient for him that a man has attracted attention, and made himself talked about, to entitle him to be called great, while perhaps he is only a blusterer, a braggart, a servile imitator, a mere *homunculus*. In this way the quantity of geniuses and talented individuals he has unearthed is something extraordinary. The result of this is a radical error in his tables of

the distribution of geniuses. The superiority that he attributes, in this respect, to certain of our southern departments, as compared with the Norman departments, for example, would have to be reversed if we considered the relative quality and kind of the genius involved. For the same reason, the relation established between genius and republican modes of government is undoubtedly not so precise and simple as is stated. But the worst of it is that in thus augmenting the number of men of genius, it is found that we have, in consequence of the above mentioned equation, also increased the number of the demented and the degenerate!

If, moreover, it is true that the conservative mind, with less genius, insanity, and criminality, is evidence of the senility of the race, how can we accept the thesis that genius and the spirit of innovation are also absolute evidence of a neurasthenic condition? Shall we deny sound nerves to robust and vigorous youth? This, indeed, is not what Lombroso wished to assert. Yet the famous thesis always confronts us: *Latet anguis in herba*. The least sign of degeneracy is enough for him to brand a man, and not only are all geniuses in his eyes unbalanced, but even the insane are without any ado baptised geniuses; with the result that all is heaped together in one great mass—genius, insanity, and spirit of revolution.

I shall not dwell any longer on these criticisms. They are simply intended as an admonition to the learned M. Lombroso against the allurements of a badly founded theory, and against the dangers arising from a too hasty preparation of his books. Whatever may be its defects, he has at least brought together in his present book many ideas. I advise all to read with care what he says about women (and how many will find him misoneistic on this point!), concerning their great influence in *rebellions*, which are always barren of results, and their impotence in *revolutions*, which are always productive of good. In the second part of his work, namely, in the section entitled *Juridical and Political Applications*, nearly all he says is to be commended. I agree with the authors—or I do not wish to forget M. Laschi—as to what they tell us in relation particularly to pettifogging parliamentarianism and public instruction. Their conclusions are perhaps not connected with the

thesis in any very intimate manner. But this is not of much consequence, as they possess an independent value of their own.

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In a previous communication I referred to the work of Savvas-Pacha on Musulman jurisprudence. I have now to announce a work entitled *Souvenirs du Monde musulman*, by M. CH. MISMER, (published by Hachette,) the fourth and last volume of a valuable series which is greatly deserving of attention. M. Mismer, who has lived a long time in the East—at Constantinople, in Crete, and in Egypt—and was acquainted with the leading personages of the Empire, does not hesitate to return here to the theory which he set forth more than twenty years ago in his *Soirées de Constantinople*, his theory, namely, of the social advantages, and even the superiority, of Islamism over Christianity; subject however to the special worth of the races which belong to either of these two forms of religion. This opinion is not lightly uttered, and it will appear the more striking in view of the present crisis of social and moral decomposition which is now spreading throughout the western nations.

In the work of M. Mismer will be found some of the great and striking qualities of the observing and thoughtful mind. In connection with a special problem of great importance in public instruction, that of heredity, I shall call to the attention of my readers the following statement, made with reference to the young men of the "Egyptian Mission" in France, directed by M. Mismer for ten years. "The capacity of a pupil," says he, "was always found to be intimately connected with the cerebral culture of his ancestors and the faculties constituting the superiorities of his race." "It was the same," adds he, "from the moral standpoint." Undoubtedly, if M. Mismer had taken the pains to make a note of the facts summed up in his statement, and to present the full case of the numerous pupils that he has had under his care, he would have been able to furnish science with data of the greatest value. Let us at least receive his lessons as he offers them to us. They are the fruit of the experience of a "man of action," and it speaks well for an observation that it has rendered good service in practice.

LUCIEN ARRÉAT.